

Fora Family (Fiona: Taster)

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Personality

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Ford Family
(Ford's Theatre)

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

ON MURDER OF LINCOLN

"HERE comes the handsomest man in the United States!"

Young Harry Ford, who made the remark, was standing on the sidewalk in front of his father's theater, in Tenth street, in Washington. The date was April 14, 1865. The man of whom he spoke, Wilkes Booth, was approaching from the direction of E street. He was young—only 25 years of age—and faultlessly dressed. It was not without good reason that Ford spoke of him in such terms of admiration; beyond question he was one of the handsomest men of his day.

It was just about noon, and Booth was coming to the theater, as he did every day, to get his mail. An actor by profession, he was for the time being unemployed, but found it convenient to have his letters addressed to Ford's.

When he reached the theater he passed a pleasant word with Harry, asking him if there was anything new. Harry could not think of anything in particular, except that President Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln were coming to see the show that night. A messenger had arrived only a few minutes earlier with a request that a box be reserved for the White House party. They were to have the upper box on the right of the stage.

The colloquy between the two young men lasted only a minute or two. Then Booth went into the theater, got his letters, came out, sat down on the steps, read his mail, and remained there for a little while, apparently thinking. Finally he rose to his feet and walked down the street again, in the direction from which he had come.

Nobody will ever know what were the thoughts that passed through the mind of the actor as he sat there on the steps after putting his letters in his pocket. But there seems to be every reason to believe that during those moments the plan to assassinate the President was first formed. Here was a tempting opportunity to avenge at one blow the fancied wrongs of the South, and an insane impulse bade him seize it.

A conspiracy against Mr. Lincoln, in which Booth, Payne, Atzerott, and a number of others were engaged, had already been formed for quite a while. Those in the plot had met repeatedly, for the purpose of talking it over, at the Kirkwood House (where the Raleigh Hotel now stands) and other places. But the plan in view was not to kill the President. He was to be kidnapped, carried south to Richmond, and there kept as a hostage. In order to compel the Federal government to come to terms, especially with regard to an exchange of prisoners.

It is not unlikely that this extraordinary project, about which there was more than a dash of the theatrical, originated in the imaginative brain of Booth himself. But circumstances did not work out so farably. There was one occasion on which it might possibly have been carried through—when, as had been announced, Mr. Lincoln was going to be present at an entertainment at the Soldiers' Home, just outside of Washington. An attempt was to be made to seize him, either on the way thither or coming back. But, at the last moment, important business intervened, and Secretary Chase was sent instead.

This failure, when the scheme seemed actually on the verge of fruition, so disheartened the plotters that most of them backed out, abandoning the conspiracy. Such, in fact, was the situation that had arrived on the fatal morning of April 14 when Wilkes Booth came to Ford's Theater to get his mail, and learned, incidentally, that the President was to see the play—"Our American Cousin," with Laura Keane—that evening.

It was about half an hour after noon when the young actor, getting up from the steps of the theater on Tenth street, flicked a few particles of dust from his irreproachable pantaloons, and walked away. Nobody knows what he did during the afternoon; but early in the evening he met Payne and Atzerott at the Clarendon Hotel, on the southwest corner of Ninth and F streets—a site now occupied by a huge granite office building. By this time he had fully matured his plan to kill Mr. Lincoln, and he unfolded it to his fellow-conspirators. Payne agreed to undertake the part of the scheme allotted to him, which was to murder Mr. Seward, the Secretary of State—a project which was afterward carried out almost with success. Atzerott, however,

refused to have anything to do with the business. He said that he had been perfectly willing to try to kidnap the President, but he drew the line at shedding blood. At the same time he made no attempt to interfere, and, as if to wash

his hands of the whole affair, immediately left the city by train.

What followed is a matter of familiar

history. Booth went to the theater about 10 o'clock in the evening, mounted to the gallery, and, watching for a favorable opportunity, stole along the passageway that gave entrance to the President's box. In those days the chief magistrate of the nation was not guarded by detectives, as is now the case, and it was easy for the assassin to enter the box from the rear and shoot Mr. Lincoln in the back of the head.

Of course there was tremendous excitement and confusion during which the assassin leaped over the rail of the box to the stage. Catching his foot in the flap that draped the box, he fell upon the stage in such a manner as to break his ankle. Then, addressing to the audience the words, "See semper tyrannus!" with a theatrical gesture he turned and fled. During the play at the moment when in the midst of its performance, nobody had the presence of mind to try to stop him, and he succeeded in reaching the alley way alongside the box and mounting his horse, which he had left there in charge of a boy. Before the hue and cry was toward Surrattville (now Clinton), Md., crossing the Eastern branch of the Potomac by the navy yard bridge.

The story of the man-hunt that followed has been too often told to be worth repeating here. Riding southward, Booth paused at the house of a physician, Dr. Mudd, about 36 miles from Washington, to have his ankle set. Meanwhile, on the

road to Surrattville, he was joined by a young man named Herold—a half-witted fellow, who had been a sort of hanger-on at Ford's Theater, and, as was natural, a great admirer of Booth. He was afterward hanged, together with Payne, Atzerott, and Mrs. Surratt, but persons who today are best acquainted with the details of the assassination are of the opinion that he was innocent of complicity in the affair.

Although Federal troops were scouring the country on both sides of the Potomac, in pursuit of the assassin, a number of days elapsed before he was finally run down, on a farm not far from the Rappahannock River. The barn in which he had taken refuge was set on fire, and, after Herold had come out and surrendered himself, Booth, who declared his intention to fight to the last, was shot through a crack in the building, by a sergeant named Boston Corbett.

Corbett received a great deal of applause for this act, for which he claimed and received part of the reward which had been offered for Booth, dead or alive. As a matter of fact, however, it was very unfortunate that the matter should have terminated in such a way. If Booth had been captured, instead of being killed, the lives of two persons, afterward hanged, though almost undoubtedly innocent, might have been saved through his testimony.

There never was adequate evidence to show that young Herold was implicated in the conspiracy or concerned in the crime. Of Mrs. Surratt the same thing might said. But public sentiment was passionately inflamed, as was natural under the circumstances, and demanded victims. Consequently, Mrs. Surratt and the half-witted youth perished on the scaffold with Payne and Atzerott.

The bullet fired by Boston Corbett struck Booth in the neck, severed the spinal cord, and killed him instantly. His body was put aboard a little scumper and carried up the Potomac to the Washington navy yard, where it was transferred to the monitor Montauk at night. What became of it from that time on is more or less of a mystery. The understanding is that it was removed from the monitor and buried under the old penitentiary at the Washington Arsenal. But official records on the subject are surprisingly incomplete, and even to this day the final disposition of the assassin's remains is a carefully kept secret, known only to a very few persons.

A story has often been published to the effect that Booth's body, about four years after its burial in the manner described, was dug up and transferred by friends to a cemetery in Baltimore. There is not the slightest truth in such a statement, however, the fact being that the skeleton, strung together with wires, is still preserved and in the possession of the government, though hidden from public view. The War Department could tell where it now is, if it chose.

The body never underwent any proper identification, and there are not a few persons today who actually believe that it was not Wilkes Booth who was shot to death in the barn, but another man. Published reports in the newspapers have even gone so far as to identify one individual or another as the assassin, who, according to the theory thus promulgated, made his escape and lived for many years, under an assumed name, in this or that part of the country. There is no reasonable doubt, however, that such notions are utterly without basis in fact.

Mr. Lincoln died at 7:30 o'clock on the morning after he was shot, in a small brick house directly opposite Ford's Theater, to which he was carried. This house is now a Lincoln museum, filled with memorials of the martyr President, including the tall silk hat which he wore on the fatal night, the chair in which he sat when the bullet pierced Ford's Theater, to which he was carried. This house is now a Lincoln museum, filled with memorials of the martyr President, including the tall silk hat which he wore on the fatal night, the chair in which he sat when the bullet pierced Ford's Theater, to which he was carried. This house is now a Lincoln museum, filled with memorials of the martyr President, including the tall silk hat which he wore on the fatal night, the chair in which he sat when the bullet pierced Ford's Theater, to which he was carried.

Most interesting of all are photographs of the execution of Payne, Atzerott, Herold, and Mrs. Surratt, in the yard of the penitentiary. The first picture in the series shows the reading of the death warrant, while friendly persons shelter Mrs. Surratt from the sun with umbrellas—the day being frightfully hot. In the second photograph the executioners are putting black caps on the doomed prisoners, and in the third the latter are

seen swinging from the gallows, while soldiers ranged along the walls of the prison yard look down upon the dismal spectacle—the final termination of a wretched and horrifying tragedy.

RENE BACHE.

Story of a Man Who was in the Box-Office.

Grounds for the Belief That Booth Intended to Kill Grant.

A Reminiscence of the Great Tragedy That is Full of Interest.

The Washington Evening Critic publishes the following interesting interview relative to the assassination of President Lincoln. Mr. Harry Ford, who is managing the opera house in Washington, is a brother of Mr. John T. Ford who owned the old Tenth Street theater. Mr. John T. Ford on the night of the assassination was in Richmond visiting some friends. Mr. Harry Ford was in the box-office. With him were J. S. Seas Ford, who is also connected with the present Ford, and the husband of Laura Keane. Miss Keane was then playing an engagement on Tenth street, the place for that night being "Our American Cousin." Mr. Ford had invited the president and Gen. Grant to attend the performance. The National theater had also extended to them a similar invitation. Mr. Lincoln accepted Mr. Ford's invitation. Gen. Grant could not do so, because he had left that day to visit his mother, who was living in New Jersey. Said Mr. Ford to-day:

THE OPPORTUNITY.

"Booth, you see, as an actor and friend of the house, had the full run of the place. He could go anywhere he wanted to. It was the easiest thing in the world for him to find his way without hindrance and without difficulty to the president's box. I told him that we expected President Lincoln and Gen. Grant at the play that night. Also told him that we were going to have those two distinguished men on one side and Gen. Lee on the other. Booth broke into a denunciation of Lee for having given up the sword of Virginia, which he had promised never to surrender. He, however, showed no unusual excitement."

"Did you see him when he came to the theatre in the evening?"

"Yes; he came in about 8 o'clock. He stopped at the box-office and chatted a few minutes. He laid a cigar stump on the ledge in front of him, saying, with a laugh, as he did so: 'He who would this stump displace must meet J. Booth face face to face.'"

HEARD THE SHOT.

"When did you next see him?"

"After the shooting. We heard the shot in the box-office, but paid not attention to it at first. If you recollect, there is a scene in 'Our American Cousin' in which Sir Edward Trenchard puts a pistol to his head with suicidal intent. We in the box thought the pistol had gone off accidentally, but the noise and confusion which followed, and the remembrance that the attempted suicide did not take place until the third act, made us change our minds. I threw open the wicket looking from the box-office upon the stage. Booth was crouched on the stage with a knife in his hand. He was crouched upon his side. I saw him get up and run across the stage, from the rear of which he made his escape. No, I did not hear the words, so sapper tyrannus. They were used by Booth in the box. I do not think that there is any doubt that Booth injured himself when he jumped from the box. I had, in the absence of

the man who usually attended the matter, arranged the box during the day. I had procured the loan of flags from the treasury department, and had hung in front of the box a picture of Washington. Booth's spur caught in that picture. It was ripped down several inches."

"When you saw Booth crouched on the stage did you suspect what had occurred?"

THE KNIFE FOR GRANT.

"No; we thought that there had been a fight and that Booth was in it. We thought that someone had shot at him and that he had drawn his knife in self-defence. As soon as we learned the facts, and we were but a short time doing so, I came to the conclusion that I have ever since held, that Booth intended that knife for General Grant."

"In rushing from the building did not Booth injure someone else?"

"Yes, he struck at Withers, the leader of the orchestra, who had gone under the stage at the close of the act and who encountered Booth. The latter had the knife in his hand when he struck Withers, but he did not intend to stab him. He held the blade of the knife laterally, not perpendicularly. Withers' clothes were cut through and an incision was also made in the skin."

THE ESCAPE.

"When Booth got to his horse, he, with the butt end of his pistol, knocked the man down who held the animal. The man who brought the horse to the appointed place was Spangler, our stage carpenter. Spangler was a great admirer of Booth, and would do anything for him. That he knew nothing of Booth's intention was evident from the fact that he gave the horse to another man. Spangler, however, had to spend three years in the Dry Tortugas."

"How long after the shooting was it before the president was removed?"

"About ten minutes. He was taken to 516 Tenth street. The house was the home of the Peterson family. It is now occupied by the Washington Sentinel."

"Were you suspected of complicity in the crime?"

"Yes. There was some talk of it at first, but the examination showed that it was unfounded. We were held only as witnesses."

THE ASSASSINATION OF LINCOLN.

STATEMENT OF JOHN T. FORD

What Prompted Booth to Commit the Murder.

BALTIMORE, Md., June 15. The impression has long prevailed that Mr. John T. Ford, who was manager of Ford's Theatre at the time of President Lincoln's assassination, was familiar with facts in connection with the matter that had never appeared in print, and he was approached by a reporter and asked if such was the case. Mr. Ford remarked that he had been frequently requested to give expression to his views on the subject, but had declined. A general conversation on the subject, however, ensued, the substance of which, with Mr. Ford's permission, is given. It throws some light on the great tragedy. Mr. Ford said: "John Wilkes Booth was trained, from earliest infancy, to consider the almost defunct assassin, Brutus, first of Shakespeare immortalized since. His father was named Junius Brutus; his brother is now the bearer of that surname. The great Booth frequently appeared in the play of 'Julius Caesar,' and not later than 1864 three of his sons acted the three leading characters of the play to an audience that applauded the sentiments of Brutus to the echo. Now, trace the assassination of Lincoln."

On the morning of April 14, 1865, Booth, who had conspired for six months previous to abduct President Lincoln and convey him a prisoner to the South, was the last guest at breakfast at the National Hotel in Washington. The surrender at Appomattox had ended all chance for him to carry out his original conspiracy. He left the hotel after ten o'clock that morning, and walked up Sixth street to H, and stopped at the Surratt house, where he met the widow who kept it, returning from the religious exercises of Good Friday, and then in the act of going over her former country place, the vehicle to convey her already at the door, to collect some money due her, so as to pay what was due by her to the Gilver estate. He then, when informed of her intended visit, requested her to get some articles belonging to him that he had left at the country place, and then, bidding her adieu, he walked up H street to Tenth, and down Tenth to the theatre. When he reached there it was about, or probably a little later than twelve o'clock, Sunday. There he heard for the first time that both President Lincoln and General Grant were to visit the theatre that night. The private box was in process of decoration. The White House messenger had been there an hour before to secure its use. I believe (and all reliable written or oral testimony confirms this belief) that then and there the terrible thought of assassination first suggested itself. It came like this: "If I failed to serve the South in my conspiracy to abduct, I can now be her Brutus." This thought, fastened on his brain, led him to go from the theatre toward the Kirkwood House, to have a conference with some of his old conspirators. John Surratt was away. O'Leighin was in Baltimore, and Arnold was in a sutler's store at Fortress Monroe. They knew the abduction conspiracy had been abandoned, but Payne, Atzerott and Harold were in Washington. These three he got together and conspired with them to kill the President, the victorious general and some of the Cabinet. He must have written, between the time when he parted with his co-conspirators and the time he again appeared at the theatre, a lengthy statement for publication, excusing the intended crime by Roman precedent.

When dying he referred to it for his justification. He gave, on the evening of the 14th, a package to an actor, directing its delivery the next day to the *National Intelligencer*. The actor confessed to him, frightened at the risk he ran, broke the seal, and the inclosed matter, and at midnight burned it. The package had been preserved, it would have revealed the declaration that until noon that day it was not a premeditated murder, but feeling deeply the humiliation of the South to the people of which he bore all the love that Brutus ever felt for Rome, he would strike down that night the leading men of the victorious hosts who were then shouting their praise of triumph. When dying, with his face lit up with the blaze of the burning lamp upon the Garrett farm just at the break of day, on the morning of April 24, he muttered some words. A soldier bent over him and caught them from his fast-fading breath. First, a message for his mother—"Tell her I did it, as I thought for the best"—and then he said, "Tell others that the communication I wrote, addressed to the *National Intelligencer*, will explain why I did what I did."

During the conspiracy trial at the arena of the *Washington*, Joseph Holt, the Judge Advocate, called John F. Coyle, then the publisher of the *National Intelligencer*, and asked if that communication had ever been received. His reply was, "No." It was, continued Mr. Ford, "burned in the grate of a chamber of a boarding house, and a Catholic priest, now living in Washington, had the fact confessed to him soon afterward. I had the occurrence revealed to me, with the added information of the confession, by the party who was the custodian of the package. This fully sustains my theory that John Wilkes Booth had not contemplated the assassination of President Lincoln when he met Mrs. Surratt at midday, and he never met her again. In order to demonstrate that his brain was turned by the poetic and dramatic glamour which transmitted the story of the Roman assassination, it is but just to describe him at this time. In person he was remarkably handsome, with a face of singular manly beauty; in perfect health; less than twenty-six years of age, and almost idolized by his friends. As an actor, he could earn at least \$10,000 per annum. He was so popular in Boston that, during an engagement at the Museum, hundreds of ladies have waited to see him leave the stage to go to his hotel. The facts and opinions, will, I think, show the great danger of glorifying assassination under any circumstances. Julius Caesar was to Rome 'the union of the scholar, soldier and the gentleman.' 'Highly Caesar, all Rome did love him once not without cause,' yet Cassius did say, 'How many ages hence shall this Your lofty scene be acted over in States unborn and accented yet unknown?' 'Was this,' added Mr. Ford, in closing the interview, 'the incarnation of dramatic prophecy suggesting the crime that occurred 1909 years after—in States unborn and accented yet unknown' when Caesar died?"



JOHN T. FORD,

the veteran theatrical manager and proprietor of Ford's Grand Opera House, died suddenly at his home, 1,536 North Gilmore Street, Baltimore, Md., Wednesday, March 14. His death was due to the after effects of *la grippe*, from which he suffered about two months ago. He had been confined to the house for about one month, but was apparently progressing favorably, and his death was a surprise, not only to the entire community, but to the members of his household. John Thomson Ford was born in the City of Baltimore, April 16, 1829, and was educated in the public schools of that city, together with one year's tuition at Mount Hope College. At the age of ten years he went to work in a grocery store in his native city. In 1844 he went to Richmond Va., and became apprenticed to his maternal uncle, Wm. Greanor, a tobacco manufacturer, with whom he continued for three years, when he started a newspaper and periodical store in a small way. While engaged in this business he wrote a successful local farce for the Nightingale Minstrels, then in Richmond, and this afterwards led to his becoming business manager for that company. He then left Richmond for Baltimore in the early part of 1850, and in the succeeding Winter he began his professional career with the "Nightingales" at the old Masonic Temple on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia. He remained in minstrel management for about four years, visiting all of the cities east of the Mississippi River. In the season of 1854-55 Mr. Ford formed a partnership with George Kunkel and Thos. Moxley in the leasing of the Holiday Street Theatre, in Baltimore, and the Richmond Theatre, Messrs. Kunkel and Moxley taking charge of the Richmond end of the enterprise and Mr. Ford of the Baltimore end. Mr. Ford's maternal grandmother had been associated with the Holiday Street Theatre when Warren & Wood first became its managers, fifty years previously. For some time before it passed into Mr. Ford's hands the theatre had been the subject of much litigation and had been unsuccessful. The building was out of repair, the scenery old and mutilated. Under his energetic management the establishment attained a degree of popularity and prestige never before known in the theatrical annals of Baltimore. In 1859 James J. Gifford remodeled the theatre for Mr. Ford, and on August 28 it was reopened by Stuart Robson in "The Stripes to Conquer."

The copartnership between Messrs. Ford and Kunkel & Moxley was dissolved by mutual consent in 1857, and Mr. Ford became sole lessee and manager of the Holiday Street Theatre. He subsequently leased the Front Street Theatre. The Holiday Street Theatre was purchased by Mr. Ford in 1870, for which, with some adjoining property, he paid George Small and Washington Booth \$300,000. On September 10, 1873, the Holiday Street Theatre was burned. It was rebuilt in 1874 and was reopened in August, the audience crowding all parts of the house. Mr. Ford leased the theatre in 1876 to William J. Gilmore, the variety manager of Philadelphia, and in May, 1877, sold the theatre to Messrs. Small & Booth. Mr. Ford's management Louis Fayne, Adeline Patti, Edwin Forrest, Charles Kean and many other leading artists appeared at the Holiday. There Joseph Jefferson, Edwin Adams, John McCullough

and other stars, afterward renowned, won their earliest successes, and there also many new plays by George H. Miles, Edward Spencer, Clinton W. Baylure, Anna Ford and other distinctively Southern authors were originally presented.

Mr. Ford's first theatrical venture in Washington was undertaken in 1856, and for years afterwards he conducted theatrical enterprises in that city. He built three theatres there. The first, on Tenth Street, was consumed by fire, and on the site he built the structure known as Ford's Theatre and associated with the Lincoln tragedy. At the time of the assassination of Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Ford and his brother Harry were "incarcerated in the old Capitol building," the theatre was seized by the government and afterward Mr. Ford was paid \$100,000 for it by Congress. Later he was manager of the house corner of Ninth and Louisiana Avenues. In the theatre in Richmond, Va., he had Joseph Jefferson for his stage manager and Edwin Adams for his leading actor. John Wilkes Booth was likewise a member of the company. In 1871 Mr. Ford built the Grand Opera House, in Baltimore, and there his attention and labor had ever since been concentrated, though not to the neglect of many important outlying enterprises. In 1878 he assumed the management of the South Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, with J. Fred Zimmerman as resident partner. That season was a poor one throughout the country, but Messrs. Ford & Zimmerman prospered, and the engagements of Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, the Hoss Opera Company, and finally "Pinafore" carried them along buoyantly. Mr. Ford's production of "Pinafore" Jan. 1879, was the earliest after that of Montgomery Ward, in Boston, in this country. Mr. Ford was the first American manager to offer any compensation to authors of the piece, and the pleasant memory of this proceeding doubtless prompted Gilbert and Sullivan in coming to this country with their holiday, "The Pirates of Penzance," to entrust their business to Mr. Ford's hands.

Mr. Ford, during his career, spent large sums of money in Baltimore. The rebuilding of the Holiday Street Theatre, after its destruction by fire, cost \$50,000, and the present opera house, with its accessories, cost \$125,000. His own made an estimate that in advertising he had expended almost a million. For charitable benefits he had paid out considerably over \$100,000. When Mr. Ford became manager of the Holiday, the theatrical business was at its lowest ebb in that city. He undertook its management, and in twenty years paid rent and expended on it a sum that aggregated \$200,000. The history of John T. Ford from that period to this embraces virtually the dramatic and lyric annals of Baltimore. Among other famous actors who either starred first under Mr. Ford's management, or entered the profession under his direction were John S. Clark, John T. Raymond, Stuart Robson, John W. Abigail Sr., Geo. C. Bouffice, Robert Emmet French, Oliver Byron, C. B. Bishop, Maggie Mitchell, Minnie Palmer, the Chapman Sisters, Annis Montague, Eleanor Cahoon, and many others.

Mr. Ford's managerial career covered the entire period of the professional lives of Edwin Booth, W. J. Florence, John Sleeper Clarke, John McCullough, Edwin Adams, Mary Anderson, John T. Raymond and many others. He began his professional career when Julius Brutus Booth and Edwin Forrest were the great tragedians of the American stage. He frequently managed Mr. Forrest's engagements, and he has starred the three sons and two grandsons of the elder Booth. Mr. Ford built two theatres in Baltimore, one in Washington and one in Alexandria, and operated many of the theatres in the South. He produced "Coriolanus" at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia, with Edwin Forrest in the title role, and at various times conducted the Southern tours of Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, Mary Anderson, Charles Cushman, Modjeska and other prominent stars. Edwin Booth began his career as a star in the Atlantic States under Mr. Ford's management in 1855, at the Front Street Theatre, Baltimore. Mr. Ford was still actively engaged in business, although his son, Charles E., has been for some time manager of the Grand Opera House. Mr. Ford's death was being making preparations for a local revival of Shakespearean plays, with Creston Clarke as the star, to be supported by Mr. Ford's daughter, Martha, this revival being only preliminary to a tour during the coming season of these two performers, under Mr. Ford's management. In Baltimore, during the forty years of Mr. Ford's man-

agerial life, he held many positions of trust and honor. He was many times a member of the City Council, in each of its branches, and at different times covering a space of two years was ex-officio mayor of the city. He had been a director of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, president of the Union Railroad, president of the Free Summer Excursion Society, president of a number of the Baltimore and Annapolis Railroad, president of the Maryland Penitentiary. On one occasion he was the recipient of a magnificent gold medal, presented to him by the citizens of Baltimore for saving citizens in acknowledgement of his civic services. He married Edith Andrews, of Hanover County, Va., who survives him, together with ten children, four sons and six daughters, namely: Charles E. Ford, George T. Ford, John T. Ford Jr., and Harry M. Ford; Mrs. James P. Richardson and Mrs. John P. Richardson. Mr. Ford was a kind and devoted husband and father, a generous benefactor and a good citizen. He numbered among his friends some of the foremost and most noted men of his time and his native city, because of his death, mourns the loss of one of its most cherished sons.

The funeral services were held 16, and were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Joseph T. Smith, pastor emeritus of the Central Presbyterian Church, a life long friend of Mr. Ford. The services were held at the residence of the family, 1616 North Broadway, and feeling address. The services at the house were closed with prayer by Rev. C. Herbert Richardson. The interment was made in Loudoun Park Cemetery. The funeral cortege was met by a band of thirty pieces, composed mainly of the members of the Grand Opera House orchestra. The funeral cortege was met by a band of thirty pieces, composed mainly of the members of the Grand Opera House orchestra. The funeral cortege was met by a band of thirty pieces, composed mainly of the members of the Grand Opera House orchestra. The funeral cortege was met by a band of thirty pieces, composed mainly of the members of the Grand Opera House orchestra.

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.
EDITOR OF THE CLIPPER.—The writer was in the employ of the veteran manager, the late John T. Ford, in 1859-60, as copyist and assistant treasurer at the old Holiday Street Theatre, Baltimore, Md. The late Clifton W. Taylor, lawyer, actor and dramatist, was then Mr. Ford's treasurer. It may be of interest to know how Mr. Ford began his career as a theatrical manager, so I pen this. About 1841 George Kunkel, the brother of Harry and Wm. Penn Lehr (three partners), Jacob K. Search (my father), Wm. Morgan (thompson), all dead and gone; Thomas Moxley, of Baltimore, and others whom I cannot remember, organized a minstrel troupe in Philadelphia, under the name of Kunkel's Nightingale Ethiopian Opera Troupe (the minstrel business was in its infancy then). They appeared for some time at Fiske's Museum, which stood on Chestnut Street, between Sixth and Seventh. Afterwards they started on a tour through the States, and in 1850 or 1851 they came in contact with Mr. Ford, who was a traveling book agent. He became the agent of the troupe on shares, and by good business management he made the Nightingales the most popular troupe on the road. Shortly after they formed a firm under the title of Ford, Kunkel & Moxley, and traveled with the troupe all over the States. Their success in the South was immense. About 1854 or '55 the firm, which individually had become wealthy (for those times), concluded to disband the troupe and engage in theatricals as a firm. Three theatres were secured—the Holiday Street, Baltimore, which Mr. Ford managed; the old National, Washington, D. C., managed by Thomas Moxley (who used to coach business in the land), and the Richmond Theatre, Richmond, Va. They engaged two good stock companies, and adapted the attractions and varied so that by interchanging these two companies supplied the three theatres. The firm could not agree, and they dissolved after the second season, and each one of the firm took the sole management of their respective theatres. The rebellion swayed Kunkel in Richmond, and an argument knocked out Moxley in Washington, but Mr. Ford, a thorough business man, made the Holiday Street, Baltimore, a success. I can remember from the time Mr. Ford took charge of the Holiday Street, up to 1859, that he was the only manager of the theatre at one time in the stock company: Joseph Jefferson, Jno. Sleeper Clarke, Stuart Robson, Oliver Don Brou, George Clark (of New York), Geo. C. Bouffice, James Martin, Nemo Fiske and others. Jacob Rosenwald, the eminent pianist, and William Ford, the violinist, and Janisou, for years the leader of the orchestra. Yours, respectfully,
GEO. W. SEARCH, Musician.

DEATH OF JOHN T. FORD.

THE CAREER OF THE OLDEST ACTIVE THEATRICAL MANAGER IN THE COUNTRY.

Baltimore, March 14 (Special).—John T. Ford, the oldest active theatre manager in the country, died at his home in this city at 7 o'clock this morning, from heart failure, the result of weakness caused by an attack of the grip, with which he had been suffering for two weeks. He had always enjoyed the best of health until this winter. The end came suddenly. His son Harry was the only member of the family with him when he died. The arrangements for the funeral have not yet been completed, but the body will be buried in Greenmount Cemetery, near the Booth lot, where the body of his old friend, Junius Brutus Booth, is buried.

John Thomson Ford was born in Baltimore on April 16, 1829. He began to earn his living as a clerk in a grocery within a stone's throw of the present Grand Opera House, which he built. He began his theatrical career as an agent for a travelling company, called the "Nightingale Serenaders." Later he took the management of the old Drury Lane, or Holiday Street, Theatre. Soon after he took charge of a theatre in Richmond, Va. He soon became intimately associated with William



MR. JOHN T. FORD.

J. Florence, Joseph Jefferson, Junius Brutus Booth, Edwin Forrest, W. C. Macready and all the celebrated actors of those days. Among other famous actors who either starred under Mr. Ford's management or entered the profession under his direction were John S. Clark, John T. Raymond, Stuart Robson, John W. Albaugh, sr., George C. Boniface, Robert Emmett Graham, Oliver D. Byron, C. B. Bishop, Miss Mary Anderson, Miss Maggie Mitchell, Miss Minnie Palmer and the Chapman sisters.

Mr. Ford's first theatrical venture in Washington was undertaken in 1856, and for years afterward he conducted theatrical enterprises in that city. He built three theatres there. The first, in Tenth-st., was burned, and on the site he built the structure known as Ford's Theatre, associated with the death of President Lincoln. At the time of the assassination of Mr. Lincoln Mr. Ford and his brother Harry were for thirty-nine days incarcerated in the old capital prison, but, having been fully exonerated, they were released. The theatre was seized by the Government, and afterward Mr. Ford received \$100,000 for it from Congress. When he was manager of stage manager and Edwin Adams his leading man. John Wilkes Booth was likewise a member of the company. In 1878 Mr. Ford secured the lease of the Broad Street Theatre, in Philadelphia. The present place of amusement in Baltimore which bears his name and which for completeness of detail and the comfort of both players and audience is hardly surpassed in this country was built under Mr. Ford's personal supervision in 1871.

During the last twenty years Mr. Ford had furnished the Southern people with a large proportion of the theatrical exhibitions they enjoyed. Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, Miss Mary Anderson, Miss Charlotte Cushman, Mme. Modjeska and others traveled through the South under his guidance. Mr. Ford filled many positions of trust in his own city. He served for many years as a member of the City Council. His friends among celebrated people were many. Charles Dickens brought a letter of introduction to him when he last visited Baltimore, and the great novelist frequently referred to him when talking of America. S. S. Cox wrote a widely published letter to his "life-long friend Ford," explaining his retirement from the public service. Horace Greeley, Henry Winter Davis, John P. Kennedy and Daniel Dougherty were among his acquaintances. James G. Blaine once paid a high tribute to his character at a public dinner in Washington. Mr. Ford leaves a widow and the following children: Charles E., the present manager of the opera house; George T., John T. jr., Harry M., Miss Lizzie F., Mrs. James C. Richardson, the Misses May, Lucy, Saline and Martha, the last named being an actress.

1357

THE GREAT TRAGEDY

Recalled by James R. Ford in a Washington Paper.

Washington, April 16.—Thirty-two years ago yesterday, Abraham Lincoln died in the little brick house on Tenth street, opposite Ford's theater. James R. Ford, brother of the late John T. Ford, owner of the theater, gives a local paper some interesting recollections of the tragedy.

"I shall never forget that night if I live to be a hundred years old," said Mr. Ford. "I was business manager at the Washington theater and happened to be in the box office the afternoon the message came from the White House with a request from Mrs. Lincoln for the use of a box in the evening. Later in the day I went to Baltimore to transact some business with my brother and started back for Washington on an accommodation train, reaching Washington at a few minutes after 10.

"As soon as I got off the train I noticed a great commotion along Pennsylvania avenue, and hurried toward the theater, not being able to get any satisfaction of anyone I met more than that something terrible had happened in our theater.

"Just as I reached the theater they were carrying the wounded president out, and he was taken to the home of Mrs. Peterson, opposite the theater. The people were like mad and yelled like demons, demanding the authorities to produce the murderer, who at that time had not been captured. I managed to elbow my way through the crowd to the entrance of the theater, and the sight which met my eyes was, I assure you, unnerving. The people, through the excitement, were tearing the seats from their fastenings in their efforts to get out. In the meantime the soldiers encamped in and around Washington, in consequence of the surrender of Gen. Lee on April 9, were dispatched to the scene of the assassination, and within half an hour after the shooting occurred a pandemonium reigned in the vicinity.

"A heavy guard encircled the theater and troops were placed in charge of the interior. Every citizen was compelled to leave the building, including all attaches and myself. I had some friends living opposite the theater, near where the wounded president was taken, and I started across the street to spend my time there, when the line of soldiers prevented me from passing. I then walked down Tenth street, intending to go to the National hotel, as the night was miserable, made so by a thick rain which fell, but when near the hotel I was again halted by the troops and was compelled to wander about, having no place to go, until nearly midnight. President Lincoln died early Saturday morning. We attempted to open the theater some time afterward, but the government prohibited its further use as a theater, and, upon legal proceedings being threatened, it was purchased by an act of congress and utilized for government purposes."

She Clipped a Lock From Booth, the Dead Assassin

By HARLOWE R. HOYT

Last of the Clan

In Rutherford, N. J., a few days ago there passed away a woman four-score and eleven years of age. She was Blanche Chapman Ford, retired actress, and the last link actively associated with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in Ford Theater, Washington, on April 14, 1865. For she once owned the chair in which the president sat and she clipped a lock of hair from the head of his murderer, John Wilkes Booth, when his body was disinterred from its first resting place and taken to Baltimore for burial on the family plot.

Ford's Theater in Washington was owned by John T. Ford, who also managed a house in Baltimore. The Booths were born on the outskirts of the latter city and it was through long association that John Wilkes Booth was given the freedom of the Washington theater. James R. Ford, a brother, was business manager of the capital house and H. Clay Ford, another brother, was treasurer. Blanche Chapman, a convent girl at the time of the assassination, married H. Clay Ford and became an actress in the Baltimore Stock Company. Of a line of players, she was talented and quickly won recognition.

On the night of the murder, Lincoln was sitting in an old fashioned rocking chair placed in the box for his accommodation. In it he was carried across the street to the Peterson House, where he died. The chair was returned to the box but later it was seized by the War Department and placed in the Smithsonian Institute.

Clevelanders who visit Henry

Ford's Greenfield Village on the outskirts of Detroit will find interest in the old Logan County Court House, where Lincoln practiced law in his days in Illinois. In a corner of the building in a glass case is the chair in which the president was shot.

For 64 years it had remained hidden in the Smithsonian Institute. Those connected with the tragedy passed away, one by one, only Blanche Chapman Ford remained. The chair, she argued, was the personal property of her husband, taken from his room and placed in the box as a courtesy. She laid claim to it and in the spring of 1929 it was given to her. Together with the playbill which Lincoln held, she sold it to the American Association Anderson Galleries, Inc., of New York for \$2,400. Henry Ford, in turn, purchased it from them and installed it in his restored Logan County Court House.

But long before this, Blanche Chapman had been an active participant in the aftermath of the tragedy. In 1869, almost four years after the murder, the body of John Wilkes Booth was taken from the old penitentiary basement where it had been buried and turned over to his brother, Edwin. It was identified in Washington and then was transferred to Baltimore where it was properly dressed and placed in an elaborate casket in the Weaver undertaking rooms opposite the Holliday Street Theater, owned by the Fords, where the young actress was playing.

The rehearsal was in full swing when, Manager John T. Ford called her aside.

"I want you to keep your eyes and ears open but your mouth

shut," he said; and with this, led her to the funeral parlors.

Identification

There was the casket with the poor remains of John Wilkes Booth. There were Mary Ann Booth, his mother; Rosalie, his eldest sister; Dr. Joe Booth, youngest of the family, and Harry Clay Ford, whom Blanche was to marry before long. They viewed the remains and identified them.

The lips had receded showing the fine teeth. The skin had become parchmentlike but the features were sharply etched. One of the witnesses identified a "plugged" tooth from a chart. The broken left leg was inspected with its rough shoe and the booted right limb exposed. All were satisfied with the identity of the body.

Dr. Joe Booth handed Blanche Chapman a scissors from his pocket case and with them she clipped a generous lock of hair from the head of the corpse. Mrs. Booth choked her sobs, dried her tears and accepted it. She divided it between Blanche and her sister, Ella; Rosalie and herself. It was a treasured possession of Blanche Chapman's until the day of her death.

John Wilkes Booth was buried in a lot in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore, along with the members of his family who had gone before. Blanche Chapman was one who attended the funeral with her husband-to-be. For years she appeared with such actors as Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, John McCullough and John T. Raymond; was featured in stock productions and long was a Broadway actress of standing.

Her death removes the last person who participated actively in the events of the Lincoln tragedy.

JOSEPH KATZ

December 3, 1915
16 E. Mt. Vernon Place
Baltimore, Maryland

Lincolnia Publishers
Box 1110
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Gentlemen:

I have a very unusual Lincoln assassination item. It is written in the handwriting of General Grant, and reads as follows:

Washington City
Apl. 17th, 1865

Maj. Gen. Old

Ford, Manager of the theatre where the President was assassinated is now in Richmond. Have him arrested and sent under guard to Washington. Do not let it be noised about that he is to be arrested until the work is done lest he escapes.

U. S. Grant

The price of this item is \$250. If you are interested in it, I shall be very glad to hear from you.

Sincerely yours

Joseph Katz

December 6, 1935

Mr. Joseph Katz
16 E. Mt. Vernon Place
Baltimore, Maryland

My dear Mr. Katz:

Thank you very much for calling to our attention
the very interesting assassination item you have uncovered
but our appropriation here will not allow us to acquire it.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director
Lincoln National Life Foundation

1.
2/

JOSEPH KATZ

Dr. Louis A. Warren
The Lincoln Nat'l. Life Insurance Co.
Mercantile Trust Building
Baltimore, Maryland

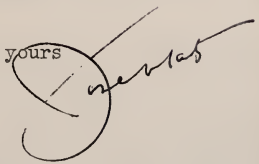
Dear Dr. Warren:

I happen to have the original order in the handwriting of General U. S. Grant ordering the arrest of John T. Ford and his brother for the assassination of Lincoln.

You can readily see this would really be one of the cornerstone documents of a "Lincoln Assassination" collection, and would be a very nice thing for The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company to own.

If you are at all interested, I should be very glad to send it to you on approval.

Sincerely yours



February 20, 1937
16 E. Mt. Vernon Place
Baltimore, Maryland

February 26, 1937

Mr. Joseph Katz
16 East Mount Vernon Place
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Mr. Katz:

Your recent letter to Dr. Warren received and has been forwarded to this department from the Insurance Office in Baltimore, Maryland.

As Dr. Warren is still absent from the city on his annual speaking itinerary, it would be impossible for him to answer at this time.

We are very much interested in the document which you say is in your possession and would like to have further details regarding it; however, we would not care to have you send it on at this time.

If you could give us the size of the document, the wording, together with the price which you are asking for it, we should be most happy to inform you by return mail if we care to have you send it for our approval.

Yours very truly,

MAG:EB
M.A. Cook

Librarian

THE JOSEPH KATZ COMPANY
ADVERTISING

BALTIMORE 16 E. MT. VERNON PLACE • NEW YORK 247 PARK AVE. • HOLLYWOOD [RADIO] 6362 HOLLYWOOD BLVD.

Baltimore

March 1st, 1937

Mr. M. A. Cook, Librarian
Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dear Mr. Cook:

The Lincoln assassination item about which I
wrote Dr. Warren is worded as follows:

Washington City
Apl. 17th, 1865

Maj. Gen. Old

Ford, Manager of the theatre where the
President was assassinated is now in
Richmond. Have him arrested and sent
under guard to Washington. Do not let
it be noised about that he is to be
arrested until the work is done lest
he escapes.

U. S. Grant

This item is absolutely authentic because I bought
it at the American Art Association, and it origi-
nally came from Thomas F. Madigan, the autograph
dealer. Madigan would not handle anything unless
it was authentic. The price is \$300.

Sincerely yours

Joseph Katz

The Man Who Gave Lincoln His Tickets

George D. Ford is company manager for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, which will open a 2-day season Friday night at the State Fair Auditorium. So the story will have to be told again although George would much rather talk about Blanche Chapman, his mother and a famous actress.

The story is about George Ford's father, Henry Clay Ford, who at nineteen was manager of Ford's Theater, Washington, on April 14, 1865. The theater belonged to George's uncle, John T. Ford, who ran a chain from Baltimore, Washington and Richmond.

On the morning of April 14 Henry C. Ford took two pair of box seats around to the White House. They were for "Our American Cousin" with Laura Keane.

"How are you feeling now, Mr. President?" asked Ford.

"Like a boy, Ford, like a boy," answered the President who had just won a war.

The Lincolns used their tickets that night but General Ulysses S. Grant and wife were not along as planned. Major Rathbone and Miss Harris were the other members of the party, the Grants having gone to New York.

About 9:30 p.m. John Wilkes Booth came in and laid his cigar down on Henry C. Ford's ticket window.

"Whoever this cigar displace
"Must meet Wilkes Booth face
to face."

So quoted Booth from an old burlesque. But let Henry tell it through his son, George.

"Less than an hour later, my father heard a commotion in the house. He had a peep hole in his office. He opened it and saw Booth walking or running across the stage. Fifteen minutes later he found out what had happened. Booth had escaped. Lincoln had been shot.

"My father may have contributed to the tension. Earlier that day Booth was around the theater and my father told him that Lincoln and Grant would be in one box. Then, kidding, he said Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee would be in the box on the other side of the stage manacled. Booth blew up."

GEORGE FORD said that his father reported, "Booth had been drunk for two years on brandy or a strong French wine. I don't think he knew what he was doing. Lewis Payne put him up to it. Payne was hung and so was Mrs. Surratt, who had nothing to do with any of it. Booth, drunk or sober, was one of the nicest guys in the world.

Henry C. Ford was jailed for three months but later released.



—Dallas News Staff Photo.

George D. Ford, manager of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo . . . "John Wilkes Booth was a Nice Guy."

George thinks his father was a Southern sympathizer and had been in the Confederate Army for "ninety and two thirds days." Uncle John tried to get Mrs. Surratt pardoned but was thrown out of the White House by Andrew Johnson.

Henry C. Ford continued in Washington although the Fords lost their theater. The government bought it for \$100,000 but they owed that much and more on it. It is now a museum in which Booth's footmarks are shown.

George Ford has finished a book about the Chapmans, his mother's family, who brought over the first Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Or he will speak about Helen Ford, his wife, now in pictures. He and Helen made a little history twenty-five years ago when they dug up backing for "Dearest Enemy," first show by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart Jr.

"I still own half the play," said Ford, "and not a month goes by that I don't get an offer for it. We are holding out for a good one, about \$40,000 worth."

HE HAS BEEN with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo for eight seasons and likes it.

"We have a fine musical director," he said, "Paul Strauss. He used to be an assistant to Dimitri Mitropoulos."

Danilova and Franklin, he says, are still great dancers but now draws attention to Nina Novak, Oleg Tupine, Yvonne Chouteau, Gertrude Tyven and "Morino and Serrano from South America."

Yvette Chauvire is flying from Paris to replace Danilova on the West Coast, while Danilova remains in Dallas to open a studio. There will be performances at 8:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday with a matinee Saturday afternoon at 2:30 p.m.

Dr. H. H. H.

The Dallas Morning News

Friday, November 23, 1951

CHARLES ELIAS FORD, THEATRE MAN, DIES

*Baltimore Impresario Was Son of
Owner of Playhouse in Which
Lincoln Was Shot.*

Special to The New York Times.

BALTIMORE, Jan. 10.—Charles Elias Fordo, President of Ford's Grand Opera House Company, and a chief figure of Baltimore's theatrical life for many years, died today at the age of 75. He had been in ill-health for two years.

The interest which Mr. Ford had in theatrical affairs was inherited. His father, John T. Ford, was not only the founder of Ford's Theatre in this city, which was built in 1870, but the owner of the theatre in Washington in which President Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, actor.

The sofa on which Lincoln was laid after receiving the fatal shot is now in the home of Mrs. Walter Hopkins, daughter of Mr. Ford, as is also a painting of George Washington, which was hanging in the box on the night of the assassination. A scratch, made by the spur of Booth in escaping from the box, is visible on the painting.

Mr. Ford was educated at the University of Virginia, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1870. Throughout his career he was intimately associated with the great actors and actresses of his time. He "put Dilla Fox on the stage," Mrs. Hopkins said, helped Julia Marlowe along the road to fame and formed exceptionally close friendships with Louis James and Joseph Jefferson.

Mr. Ford became associated with his father in the management of the opera house in Baltimore, as well as the theatres in Washington and Richmond, owned by the elder Ford.

Mr. Ford leaves a brother, John T. Ford, who is still connected with Ford's Grand Opera House Company; five sisters, two daughters and two grandsons. His wife died in 1920.

